



THOMAS KREMEN, MD

ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY AND SPORTS MEDICINE
UCLA DEPARTMENT OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY
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Discharge Instructions after Elbow Surgery

Surgery: Distal biceps tendon repair

Immobilization/brace:

- You have been placed in to a splint and sling at the operative elbow. Please maintain this until your sutures have been removed at your first post-operative visit.
- You may be transitioned to a hinged elbow brace after surgery. This is often applied by an outside vendor named Lerman and Sons (see contact information below) and I will give you a prescription for this after your stitches are removed. This is at the discretion of Dr. Kremen and will be discussed with you at the first post-operative visit.

Medications:

- You have been given a prescription for pain medicine (example: norco, oxycodone or Percocet). This medication can cause constipation, thus taking a stool softener is recommended such as Colace, dulcolax or senakot. Use the pain medication as needed for the first few days to 2 weeks, then begin to taper yourself off. You may take Tylenol (acetaminophen) in place of the narcotic medication, however this must be limited to less than 3000mg total per day. If you have liver disease then do not take Tylenol unless directed by your Liver doctor or primary care physician.
- DO NOT take ANY anti-inflammatory pain medications (examples: Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen, Aleve, Naproxen, Naprosyn) unless directed to do so by Dr. Kremen.

Other Instructions:

- Weight bearing status: no active motion of the elbow and no lifting anything until specifically instructed to do so by Dr. Kremen.
- Limit active elbow extension until directed otherwise by Dr. Kremen. This limitation usually lasts until approximately 2 weeks after surgery. You will have a splint in the early post-operative period in order to prevent active extension during this time frame.

- Full elbow extension is normally obtained by 3 to 6 weeks after surgery. If your tear is chronic (several weeks since injury) then the goal is full extension by 6 weeks after surgery under the direction of a physical therapist and myself.
- No active flexion of the elbow or supination (palm pointed up) until cleared by Dr. Kremen (approximately 4 to 6 weeks after surgery).
- DO NOT drive until instructed to do so by an orthopaedic surgeon.
- Ice can be applied to the affected arm. Always have a towel or sheet between the ice and your skin to prevent frostbite and it is recommended that you only ice for 20 minutes out of any given hour. Do not apply the ice such that weight is added to your arm, and your elbow is pushed to extend more than allowed.
- If you are a smoker, it is recommended that you refrain from smoking in the postoperative period. Smoking cigarettes or other substances will inhibit healing of your elbow repair. Nicotine gum is better than smoking cigarettes, however it still carries a smaller risk of impaired healing.
- Keep your splint (hard plaster at back of arm) on and keep it clean and dry at all times.
- You may begin showering at 4 days after surgery. The splint and dressing should be covered with a plastic bag and sealed with tape (2 bags with separate seal is recommended).
- The incision CANNOT be submerged under water for 1 month after surgery even after splint removed (i.e. no pools, lakes, baths, etc.)
- Make sure your axilla (arm pit) is completely dry after showering. Pat this area dry rather than rubbing.
- DO NOT rub or scratch the incision after splint is removed at first post-operative visit. Pat the area dry with a towel.

If you experience any serious problems or concerning findings please call our office at:

- Regular business hours: **424-259-9856**
- After hours/weekends: 310-206-6766 and ask to be connected with the doctor on call for the Sports Medicine Service.

Concerning findings:

- Excessive redness at the incision site
- Drainage from the wound for more than 4 days after surgery
- New numbness or newly discovered inability to move a specific muscle
- Fevers of more than 101.5°F.
- If you experience significant chest pain or shortness of breath, please call 911 and/or go to your local emergency room immediately as this may represent a life-threatening emergency. Please call our office to keep us informed of any such events.

Please call 424-259-9856 to make a follow up appointment or to confirm that you already have a follow up appointment scheduled. You should be seen by Dr. Kremen approximately 10 to 14 days after surgery.